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Author Biographies

Anna Bochkovskaya

Dr. Anna Bochkovskaya is Associate Professor in the Department of South Asian History at the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University. Her research interests include contemporary history of India, Punjab studies, and religious studies. She has authored chapters on Sikhism and Current Trends in Hinduism in Russian-language university textbooks *Introduction to Religious Studies* (2012, 2016) and *The History of Religions* (2014, 4th edition); chapters and translations in *Death in Maharashtra: Imagination, Perception and Expression* (2012), *Under the Skies of South Asia: Portrait and Sculpture* (2014) and *Mobility and Space* (2015). Her most recent publications focus on religion and caste controversies in the Indian Punjab. She is editor of the collective volume *Under the Skies of South Asia: Territory and Belonging* (2016).

Alokparna Das

A full-time working journalist for more than 22 years, Alokparna Das has worked for leading media houses. Besides English and Hindi dailies and business publications, she has also worked for a women's magazine, a hospitality industry journal, a travel website, and the research wing of a public relations outfit. She has more than 1,000 published articles in English, and around 100 in Hindi and Bengali. Her articles on religion and translation of hymns have been compiled and published as books. Alokparna has taught mass communication as guest faculty and presented research papers at various institutions. Her formal academic qualification includes three post graduation degrees – in English, History and Mass Communication. She is a PhD scholar at the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi.

Rajshree Dhali

Rajshree Dhali is an Associate Professor of Modern Indian History at SGTB Khalsa College, Delhi University and teaches cultural issues and environmental history of India. Her research interests include caste studies and popular religion. Her most notable published research papers include *History, Community and Identity: An Interpretation of Dalibai in Language Forum*; *Tracing the Process of Brahmanisation of a Folk Cult during 19th and 20th century in Rajasthan: A case study of Goga* in the

proceedings of Indian History Congress's 75th session; and *Making of an Identity: Meghwals of Rajasthan in Readings on Dalit Identity: History literature and Religion* edited by Prof Swaraj Basu. She has worked as Convenor of the committee for the prevention of sexual harassment, and has been active in gender studies group involving college students. She is also involved in organising heritage walks in Delhi, educational tours to neighbouring states, academic seminars, and encouraging her students in their critical writing.

Ujaan Ghosh

Ujaan Ghosh is a first-year PhD student at the Center for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata. He is interested in the colonial history of Orissa, urban history, history of religion with a particular penchant for history of science.

Swati Goel

Swati Goel, M.Phil, is a History Research Scholar at School of Liberal Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi. In her M.Phil dissertation, *Braj: Bhakti, Patronage and Exodus of Deities during 16th and 17th centuries*, she has engaged with the themes of religiosity, mercantile activities, central problematic of exodus of deities, competitive patronage and politics, in order to draw the larger picture of development of Braj region. The paper presented here is based on a part of her dissertation. She obtained her Master's degree from the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, in 2013 and did her graduation from Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi, in 2011. Her areas of interests include religious and commercial histories, and gender studies.

Ankur Goswami

Ankur Goswami (b.1990) is a Research Scholar, at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. A graduate in Physics (H), moved on to do a Masters in Sociology, from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. His dissertation for the M.Phil was titled *Allahabad Kumbh Mela: A Sociological Analysis*. His recent publication was, *Tribal Movement as Nationalism: An Analysis of Jharkhand Movement*. His areas of interest includes Social Movement, Pilgrimage in India, Sociology of Religion.

Sonika Jain

Sonika Jain has published papers in magazines, journals, conference proceedings and chapters in books on film practice and studies especially contemporary Bombay cinema as well as on pilgrimage practice and studies, yoga philosophy and practice and media research. She has been teaching undergraduate and masters courses in different aspects of film, media research, in addition to supervising written dissertations and mentoring film projects at Universities of Delhi, Amity (Noida Campus), Bristol, among others. She has also undertaken photography exhibitions and directed video projects. Sonika holds a BA (Hons.) degree (University of Delhi), an MA degree in Mass Communication (Jamia University, Delhi) and a Practice-based PhD in Documentary Film (University of Bristol, U.K).

Raj Kumar

Raj Kumar is Professor in the Department of English, Delhi University. His research areas include autobiographical studies, Dalit literature, Indian writing in English, Odia literature and post-colonial studies. He has been a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla in 1999 and has published in journals such as *Social Action*, *Sateertha Bulletin*, *The Fourth World*, *Creative Forum*, *Language Forum*, *Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature*, *Indian Literature*, *Social Scientist*, *Journal of the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies* and *Economic and Political Weekly*. Raj Kumar has also translated literary texts from Indian languages, especially Odia into English. His book, *Dalit Personal Narratives: Reading Caste, Nation and Identity* has been published by Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi in 2010 and got reprinted in 2011 and 2015. His English translation of *Bheda*, the first Odia Dalit novel is scheduled for publication by Oxford University Press in 2016.

Ian S. McIntosh

Australian anthropologist Ian McIntosh PhD is a faculty member in the School of Liberal Arts at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) where he teaches classes on Pilgrimage in World Religion, Peace and Reconciliation, and Culture and Philanthropy. Dr. McIntosh is the former Managing Director of the Harvard-based indigenous rights organization Cultural Survival Inc., and also the Deputy Country Director of the Armenia Tree Project. Dr. McIntosh has worked extensively in Aboriginal Australia on land rights and cultural heritage issues, and is a co-founder of Past Masters International (www.pastmasters.net). In 2010 he was named a Peace Fellow by Rotary International.

Pravin S. Rana

Pravin S Rana, MTM, UGC NET, PhD, Assistant Professor, Tourism Management, Banaras Hindu University, has worked on *Pilgrimage and Ecotourism in Varanasi Region* for his doctoral dissertation at University of Lucknow, 2003. He has published several papers in this field and participated at seminars held in India, Norway and Canada. He is the co-author of *Banaras Region, A Spiritual and Cultural Guide* (2002/2006, with Rana PB Singh), *Tourism Geography* (2006 with AK Singh), and author of *Pilgrimage Tourism: A Study of Varanasi Region* (2014). He is life member of Indian Tourism Congress and INTACH, Fellow at Gifu University, Japan, and active member of Forum UNESCO - University and Heritage - International network (FUUH), Spain.

Rana P. B. Singh

Rana PB Singh, PhD, FJF (Japan), FAAI (Italy), FACLA (Korea), Professor of Geography (specialisation in Cultural & Heritage Studies) at Banaras Hindu University, has been involved in studying and promoting sacred landscapes, pilgrimages and heritage planning in Varanasi region for more than 40 years. He has given lectures and presented papers at seminars across the world. His publications include 240 papers and 41 books, including *Environmental Ethics* (1993), *The Spirit and Power of Place* (1994), *Cosmic Order & Cultural Astronomy* (2009), *Heritagescapes and Cultural Landscapes* (2011), *Sacredscapes and Pilgrimage Systems* (2011), *Indo-Kyosei Global Ordering* (2011), and *Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage* (2013).